

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Yellow Jacket Manufacturing

Iowa Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Yellow Jacket Manufacturing Applies Lean Concepts To Improve Processes

Client Profile:

Yellow Jacket Manufacturing, Inc. develops and manufactures custom mufflers for original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) in the automotive replacement, recreational vehicle, and industrial equipment markets.

Situation:

Yellow Jacket recently worked with the Iowa Manufacturing Extension Partnership (IMEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, to become a supplier for a major recreational vehicle OEM. The company wanted to make improvements to this product line's processes. Yellow Jacket naturally called on the services and expertise of IMEP to assist.

Solution:

IMEP worked with the company to create a strategy that improved processes, quality, and productivity on the new product line and provided standard methods for future improvements. This strategy included training in lean principles, which was funded by the Iowa Western Community College (IWCC), 260F job training consortium. IMEP also helped form a consortium between Yellow Jacket Manufacturing and Omaha Standard to help additionally offset the cost of training.

Key individuals from both companies participated in IWCC's Lean 101, Lean Behaviors, and Lean 5S workshops in May 2001. Following the workshops, Yellow Jacket held a Lean 101 training seminar for all of its employees, funding the training with other resources. After all Yellow Jacket employees had been trained in the basics of the lean philosophy, IMEP conducted a value stream mapping exercise to help identify constraints on the product line and find ways to eliminate them. This exercise became the most valuable tool for the company as it began making improvements on its product line. With an improvement "road map," the company was able to make focused, strategic improvements and realize considerable cost savings.

Results:

Reduced inventory by \$50,000.

Improved productivity by eight percent.

Created more efficient processes.

Improved customer service.

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Testimonial:

"The processes that we learned and applied from the training that was received from the Iowa Manufacturing Extension Partnership have been very valuable. These impacts are freeing up investment dollars and personnel to be put to use in other areas of the company so that we can continue to grow. Involving management and production personnel has improved the working relationship of all involved."

John Marshall, President